

His Majesties  
GRACIOUS  
DECLARATION  
TO  
All His Loving Subjects  
FOR  
Liberty of Conscience.



By His Majesties Special Command.

LONDON,

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By my Lords of the Councils in Council  
given, John M. 1688.  
Special Command.

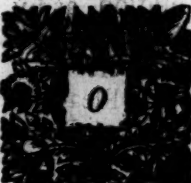
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# His Majesties

## GRACIOUS

# DECLARATION.

JAMES R.

 Our Conduct has been such in all times, as ought to have persuaded the world, that We are firm and constant to Our Resolutions, yet that ease People may not be abused by the Malice of Crafty Wicked Men, We think fit to Declare, That Our Intentions are not changed since the Fourth of April 1687. when We Issued out Our Declaration for Liberty of Conscience in the following Terms.

His Majesties Gracious Declaration to all  
His Loving Subjects for Liberty of Conscience.

JAMES R.

**I**T having pleased Almighty God not only to bring Us to the Imperial Crown of these Kingdoms through the greatest Difficulties, but to preserve Us by a more than Ordinary Providence upon the Throne of Our Royal Ancestors; There is nothing now that We so earnestly desire, as to Establish Our Government on such a Foundation as may make Our Subjects happy, and Unite them to Us by Inclination as well as Duty; Which We think can be done by no Means so effectually, as by granting to them the free Exercise of their Religion for the time to come, and add that to the perfect Enjoyment of their Property, which has never been in any case Invaded by Us since Our coming to the Crown; Which being the two things Men value most, shall ever be preserved in these Kingdoms, during Our Reign over them, as the truest Methods of their Peace and Our Glory. We cannot but heartily wish, as it will easily be believed, That all the People of Our Dominions were Members of the Catholick Church, yet We humbly thank Almighty God, it is, and



has of long time been Our constant Sense and Opinion: (which upon divers Occasions We have Declared) That Conscience ought not to be constrained, nor People forced in Matters of meer Religion: It has ever been directly contrary to Our Inclination, as We think it is to the Interest of Government, which it destroys by Spoiling Trade, Depopulating Countries, and Discouraging Strangers; and finally, that it never obtained the End for which it was employed: And in this We are the more confirmed by the Reflections We have made upon the Conduct of the Four last Reigns. For after all the frequent and Pressing Endeavors that were used in each of them, to reduce this Kingdom to an exact Conformity in Religion, it is visible the Success has not answered the Design, and that the Difficulty is invincible. We therefore out of Our Princely Care and Affection unto all our Loving Subjects, that they may live at Ease and Quiet, and for the increase of Trade, and encouragement of Strangers, have thought fit by virtue of Our Royal Prerogative, to Issue forth this Our Declaration of Indulgence; making no doubt of the Concurrence of Our Two Houses of Parliament, when We shall think it convenient for them to Meet.

In the first Place We do Declare, That We will Protect and Maintain Our Arch-Bishops, Bishops, and Clergy, and all other Our Subjects of the Church of *England*, in the free Exercise of their Religion, as by Law Established, and in the quiet and full Enjoyment of all their Possessions, without any Molestation or Disturbance whatsoever.

We do likewise Declare, That it is our Royal Will and Pleasure, That from henceforth the Execution of all and all manner of Penal Laws in Matters Ecclesiastical, for not coming to Church, or not Receiving the Sacrament, or for any other Non-conformity to the Religion Established, or for or by reason of the Exercise of Religion in any manner whatsoever, be immediately Suspended; And the further Execution of the said Penal Laws and every of them is hereby Suspended.

And to the end that by the Liberty hereby Granted, the Peace and Security of Our Government in the Practice thereof may not be endangered, We have thought fit, and do hereby straitly Charge and Command all Our Loving Subjects, That as We do freely give them Leave to Meet and Serve God after their own Way and Manner, be it in private Houses, or Places purposely Hired or Built for that use; So that they take especial care, that nothing be Preached or Taught amongst them which may any way tend to Alienate the Hearts of Our People from Us or Our Government; And that their Meetings and Assemblies be peaceably, openly, and publickly held, and all Persons freely admitted to them; And that they do signify and make known to some one or more of the next Justices of the Peace, what Place or Places they set apart for those uses.

And that all Our Subjects may enjoy such their Religious Assemblies with greater Assurance and Protection, We have thought it Requisite, and do hereby Command, That no Disturbance of any kind be made or given unto them, under Pain of our Displeasure, and to be further proceeded against with the uttermost Severity.

And forasmuch as We are desirous to have the Benefit of the Service of all Our Loving Subjects, which by the Law of Nature is inseparably annexed to, and inherent in Our Royal Person; And that none

(5)  
of Our Subjects may for the future be under any Discouragement or Disability (who are otherwise well inclined and fit to Serve Us) by reason of some Oaths or Tests, that have been usually Administred on such Occasions: We do hereby further Declare, That it is Our Royal VVill and Pleasure, That the Oaths commonly called, *The Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance*, and also the several Tests and Declarations mentioned in the Acts of Parliament made in the 25th and 30th Years of the Reign of Our late Royal Brother King *Charles* the Second, shall not at any time hereafter be required to be Taken, Declared, or Subscribed by any Person or Persons whatsoever, who is or shall be Employed in any Office or Place of Trust, either Civil or Military, under Us or in Our Government. And VVe do further Declare it to be Our Pleasure and Intention from time to time hereafter, to Grant Our Royal Dispensations under Our Great Seal to all Our Loving Subjects so to be Employed, who shall not take the said Oaths, or Subscribe or Declare the said Tests or Declarations in the abovementioned Acts and every of them.

And to the end that all Our Loving Subjects may receive and enjoy the full Benefit and Advantage of Our Gracious Indulgence hereby intended, and may be Acquitted and Discharged from all Pains, Penalties, Forfeitures, and Disabilities by them or any of them incurred or forfeited, or which they shall or may at any time hereafter be liable to; for or by reason of their Non-conformity, or the Exercise of their Religion, and from all Suits, Troubles, or Disturbances for the same: We do hereby give Our Free and Ample Pardon unto all Non-conformists, Recusants, and other Our Loving Subjects, for all Crimes and Things by them committed or done contrary to the Penal Laws formerly made relating to Religion and the Profession or Exercise thereof, Hereby Declaring, That this Our Royal Pardon and Indemnity shall be as Good and Effectual to all Intents and Purposes, as if every Individual Person had been therein particularly named; or had particular Pardons under our Great Seal, which VVe do likewise Declare shall from time to time be Granted unto any Person or Persons desiring the same: Willing and Requiring Our Judges, Justices, and other Officers, to take Notice of and Obey Our Royal VVill and Pleasure herein before Declared.

And although the Freedom and Assurance We have hereby given in relation to Religion and Property, might be sufficient to remove from the Minds of our Loving Subjects all Fears and Jealousies in relation to either; yet We have thought fit further to Declare, That We will Maintain them in all their Properties and Possessions, as well of Church and Abby-Lands, as in any other their Lands and Properties whatsoever.

*Given at Our Court at Whitehall the Fourth day of April 1687. In the Third Year of Our Reign.*

**E**Ver since We granted this Indulgence, We have made it Our principal Care to see it preserved without Distinction, as we are encouraged to do daily by multitudes of Addresses and many other Assurances We receive from Our Subjects of all Perswasions, as Testimonies of their Satisfaction and Duty; the Effects of which We doubt not but the next Parliament will plainly shew,  
and

and that it will not be in vain that we have resolved to use Our uttermost Endeavours to Establish Liberty of Conscience on such just and equal Foundations, as will render it unalterable, and secure to all People the free Exercise of their Religion for ever ; by which future Ages may reap the Benefit of what is so undoubtedly for the general Good of the whole Kingdom. It is such a Security We desire without the burthen and constraint of Oaths and Tests, which have been unhappily made by some Governments, but could never Support any, nor should men be advanced by such means to Offices and Employments, which ought to be the Reward of Services, Fidelity and Merit. We must conclude, That not only good Christians will joyn in this, but whoever is concerned for the encrease of the Wealth and Power of the Nation. It would perhaps prejudice some of our Neighbours who might lose part of those vast Advantages they now enjoy, if Liberty of Conscience were Settled in these Kingdoms, which are above all others most capable of Improvements, and of commanding the Trade of the World: In pursuance of this great Work, We have been forced to make many Changes both of Civil and Military Officers throughout our Dominions, not thinking any ought to be imployed in Our Service, who will not contribute towards the establishing the Peace and Greatness of their Country, which We most earnestly desire, as unbiass'd Men may see by the whole Conduct of Our Government, and by the Condition of Our Fleet, and of Our Armies, which with good Management shall be constantly the same, and greater, if the Safety or Honour of the Nation require it. We recommend these Considerations to all Our Subjects, and that they will reflect on their present Ease and Happiness, how far above three Year that it has pleased God to permit us to Reign over these Kingdoms. We have not appeared to be that Prince, Our Enemies would have made the World afraid of, Our chief Aim having been not to be the Oppressor, but the Father of Our People ; of which We can give no better Evidence, then by Conjurging them to lay aside all private Animosities, as well as groundless Jealousies, and to choose such Members of Parliament as may do their part to finish what We have begun for the Advantage of the Monarchy, over which Almighty God hath placed Us, being resolved to call a Parliament that shall meet in November next, at furthest.

Given at Our Court at Whitehall, the Twenty seventh day of April 1688. In the Fourth Year of Our Reign.

At





# At the Court at Whitehall

The Fourth of *May*, 1688.

By the Kings most Excellent Majesty, and  
the Lords of His Majesties most Honour-  
able Privy-Council

**I**T is this day Ordered by His Majesty in Council,  
That His Majesties late Gracious Declaration  
bearing date the Twenty Seventh of April last, be read  
at the usual time of Divine Service upon the Twentieth  
and Twenty Seventh of this Month, in all Churches and  
Chappels within the Cities of London and West-  
minster, and Ten Miles thereabout : And upon the  
Third and Tenth of June next in all other Churches  
and Chappels throughout this Kingdom. And it is  
hereby further Ordered, That the Right Reverend the  
Bishops cause the said Declaration to be sent and di-  
stributed throughout their severall and respective Dio-  
cesses, to be read accordingly.

W<sup>m</sup>. Bridgeman.